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The Honorable Jeff Miller of the First District of Florida
Washington, Wednesday, July 31, 2013

HONORING THE LIFE AND DEDICATED SERVICE OF COLONEL GEORGE E. "BUD" DAY

Mr. Speaker. I rise today to recognize the life of one of America's greatest warriors, Colonel George Everett "Bud" Day. Colonel Day was a proud resident of Northwest Florida where he retired from the United States Air Force after courageously serving our Nation with honor and distinction in three wars across four decades.

Colonel Day's service began in 1942 when he voluntarily joined the United States Marine Corps and subsequently served 30 months in the South Pacific Theater during World War II as a non-commissioned officer. Following the War, Colonel Day attended Morningside College in Sioux City, Iowa earning a Bachelor of Science degree and a Doctor of Humane Letters. He also earned a Master of Arts degree from St. Louis University, a Juris Doctor from the University of South Dakota, and a Doctor of Laws from Troy State University. Colonel Day was also admitted to practice law in South Dakota and Florida.

After being honorably discharged from the Marine Corps, Colonel Day continued his quest to serve our Nation when he joined the Air National Guard after receiving a direct commission as a Second Lieutenant in 1950. In 1951, Colonel Day was called to active duty in the United States Air Force and entered Undergraduate Pilot Training. Following his graduation from training, Colonel Day served two tours in the Far East as a fighter bomber pilot during the Korean War.

In April 1967, Colonel Day was assigned to the 31st Tactical Fighter Wing at Tuy Hoa Air Base, Republic of Vietnam. He later moved to Phu Cat Air Base where he organized and became the Commander of Detachment 1 of the 416th Tactical Fighter Squadron also known as the "Misty Super FAC's." This new unit flew two-seated F-100F Super Sabre aircraft in a pioneering top secret mission as Fast Forward Air Controllers operating inside many high threat areas of Vietnam and Laos.

On August 26, 1967, flying under the call sign "Misty-01" and after flying more than five thousand hours defending our great Nation, Colonel Day was shot down over North Vietnam and began sixty-seven long and brutal months as a Prisoner of War. Despite severe injuries from his ejection over enemy territory and repeated torture, Colonel Day was always defiant to his captors who labeled him a "hard resistor" and often singled him out for exceptionally harsh treatment. During one such event in which Colonel Day participated in a forbidden religious service amongst his fellow prisoners, Colonel Day defiantly stared down the Vietnamese guards who tried to stop the service ultimately singing our National Anthem in protest. Colonel Day's resistance, leadership, and bravery in the face of deadly enemy pressure saved the lives of countless fellow aviators who were still flying over Vietnam, and he served as an inspiration to his fellow servicemembers who were also held as Prisoners of War.

In March 14, 1973 Colonel Day was released after an

unimaginable two thousand twenty-eight days of captivity. His heroism, determination, and courage were further echoed by the presentation of our Nation's highest award, the Medal of Honor by President Gerald Ford on March 6, 1976.

Colonel Day retired from the Air Force on December 9, 1977 as the Vice Commander of the great 33rd Fighter Wing at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida. By the end of his career, Colonel Day was the Air Force's most highly decorated officer having been awarded nearly seventy military decorations and awards with an astounding fifty earned for actions in combat. A patriot in the truest sense of the word, Colonel Day never stopped looking out for his brothers in arms.

Following his retirement, Colonel Day continued to be a very passionate and active leader in the community and throughout the Nation. Colonel Day had a very successful law practice often championing veterans and military retiree issues. His leadership was instrumental in protecting the earned health care benefits of military retirees both in litigation before the federal court system and through his successful advocacy of the Congress which ultimately resulted in the restoration of military medical benefits.

Colonel Day's most important legacy is that of a family man and as a great neighbor and friend to so many in our community. Colonel Day's enduring impact on his community and Nation will be felt for generations to come. Though many have bravely served their country before Colonel Day, and many continue to honorably serve, few have endured as much as Bud Day for duty, honor, and love of country.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, it gives me great pride to honor the life and service of an American hero, Colonel George Everett "Bud" Day. Our community and countless others will miss his unwavering perseverance and optimism, but his legacy will endure for years to come. My wife Vicki joins me in extending our most sincere condolences to Colonel Day's wife, Doris; their four children, Steven; George, Jr., Lieutenant Colonel (USAF retired); Sonja; and Sandra; their fourteen grandchildren; and the entire Day family.